

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8539
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE
USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 2390

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL
SUBJECT: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 134913

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIA REGARDS SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLES IN AFRICA FAVOR-
ABLY, WHERE THOSE ROLES SUPPORT NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF STATES
AND DEFEND UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. PROBLEMS WHICH MAY
ARISE IN ETHIOPIAN VIEW INVOLVE SOVIET/CUBAN ENCROACHMENT ON
THOSE PRINCIPLES, WHICH ARE ENSHRINED IN OAU CHARTER. TO AVOID
SUCH PROBLEMS, ETHIOPIANS HAVE TRIED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN INTER-
NAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL ONES. UNWARRANTED SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE
COULD ALIENATE ETHIOPIA FROM KENYA AND DJIBOUTI, AS IT PROBABLY
ALREADY HAS DONE FROM EGYPT, SOMLIA AND SUDAN. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, CUBA AND SOVIET UNION HAVE AT-
TEMPTED TO EXPAND AND MAKE PERMANENT THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS
WITH ETHIOPIA, BUILDING UPON CRUCIAL MILITARY ROLE BOTH COUNTRIES
NOW FULFILLING HERE. WHILE CUBANS AND SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SUCCESS-
FUL IN MILITARY AREA, IT APPEARS THERE HAS BEEN ONLY MIXED SUC-
CESS IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS. ETHIOPIAN LEADERS AND
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MEDIA HAVE BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY SILENT ABOUT SHABA/ZAIRE INCIDENT
AND HAVE NOT GIVEN ANY SUPPORT TO SOVIET/CUBAN EXPLANATIONS AND
DENIALS OF INVOLVEMENT. THERE ALSO WAS RECENT INCIDENT OF CUBAN/
SOVIET ATTEMPT TO PLAY GREATER ROLE IN ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL POLI-
TICS, WHICH APPARENTLY HAS BEEN REBUFFED BY DIRG.

2. FOR SHORT TERM (2-3 YRS.), ETHIOPIA WILL CONTINUE TO BE

MILITARILY DEPENDENT ON SOVIET MATERIAL AND POSSIBLY CUBAN TROOPS, AS WELL AS TECHNICAL ADVISERS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES. IN EXCHANGE FOR THIS MILITARY SUPPORT, ETHIOPIA APPEARS PREPARED TO OFFER DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL BACKING TO THOSE DECLARED SOVIET AND CUBAN OBJECTIVES IN AFRICA WHICH DO NOT ADVERSELY EFFECT ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. EXAMPLES ARE; ZIMBABWE - REJECTION OF INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND SUPPORT OF PATRIOTIC FRONT, NAMIBIA - SOLE RECOGNITION OF SWAPO, SOUTH AFRICA - SUPPORT FOR ANTI-APARTHEID FORCES, WESTERN SAHARA - ADHERENCE TO UN DECLARATION 1514 (XV) ON GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE, AND ANGOLA - UNRESERVED SUPPORT FOR NETO AND MPLA. TO A LARGE EXTENT, ETHIOPIANS PERCEIVE OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS AS BEING RESPONSIVE TO CURRENT OAU STATED OBJECTIVES.

3. UNTIL INSURGENCY IN OGADEN AND SECESSION IN ERITREA HAVE DECREASED TO MORE MANAGEABLE LEVEL, THUS LESSENING ETHIOPIAN DEPENDENCE ON SOVIETS AND CUBANS, ETHIOPIANS WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE PUBLIC CREDIT TO SOVIETS FOR HAVING "CREATED FAVORABLE ALIGNMENT OF FORCES TOWARD SOCIALISM, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS" IN THIRD WORLD AND PAY GRATITUDE TO CUBANS FOR HAVING "SHED THEIR BLOOD WITH US ON BATTLEFIELD." IN THOSE AREAS OF AFRICA WHERE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE ACTUALLY HELPING TO REPEL AGGRESSION, TO PRESERVE NATIONAL UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF A STATE AND/OR TO ASSIST THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, ETHIOPIA WILL VIEW THEIR ROLES BENIGNLY. HOWEVER, WHERE THE SOVIETS/CUBANS ARE PERCEIVED TO BE AIDING OUTSIDE AGGRESSION
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OR MEDDLING EXCESSIVELY IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF SOVEREIGN STATE, TRADITIONAL ETHIOPIAN SKEPTICISM OF ANY NON-AFRICAN INFLUENCE ON CONTINENT WILL BE REINFORCED.

4. ETHIOPIANS PROBABLY RECOGNIZE DANGER OF EXCESSIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT ON CONTINENT AS EROSION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF AFRICAN STATES. LONG TERM PROBLEM WOULD BE SOVIETS DETERMINING AFRICAN STATES' POLICIES RATHER THAN STATES THEMSELVES. AS LONG AS THERE IS COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS, ETHIOPIANS APPARE WILLING TO WORK FOR MUTUAL BENEFITS. HOWEVER THIS COULD CHANGE IF ETHIOPIA WERE ABLE TO MINIMIZE ITS MILITARY DEPENDENCE.

5. ETHIOPIA WOULD PROBABLY COUNSEL ITS SISTER STATES TO ACCEPT SOVIET AND CUBAN ASSISTANCE ONLY IF THE FORMER RETAINED CONTROL OVER THAT ASSISTANCE AND DID NOT HAVE TO COMPROMISE ITS SOVEREIGNTY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ETHIOPIANS MIGHT VIEW SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE AS DIVISIVE ISSUE, SPECIALLY WITH KENYA, SUDAN AND EGYPT, IF VISIBLE NEED FOR FORMERS' ASSISTANCE NO LONGER EXISTED BUT THEIR PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA DID. AS LONG AS SERIOUS MILITARY PROBLEMS PERSIST IN ERITREA AND OGADEN, ETHIOPIA WILL DEFEND ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT AND WHAT IT BELIEVES THE RIGHT OF OTHERS TO SEEK AND RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM ANY COUNTRY, INCLUDING USSR AND CUBA.

HOWEVER, ETHIOPIA IS WELL AWARE THAT LARGE FOREIGN PRESENCE
ULTIMATELY WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO LONG TERM STABILITY IN HORN OF
AFRICA.

6. THIS MESSAGE HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH CHARGE
MATHERON, WHO MAY HAVE SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS UPON HIS RETURN TO
ADDIS PRIOR TO MAY 31.
WALKER

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